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Michael F. Easley
Governor

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William G. Ross Jr.
Secretary, DENR

TRUST FUND GRANTS TOP \$16 MILLION

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority awarded 10 grants worth \$3.6 million to local governments for parks and open space projects at its July meeting at Weymouth Woods State Nature Preserve.

The awards represented fourth quarter revenues into the trust funds and earmarked for the local government grant program. In May, the authority made 34 similar grants worth \$12.8 million.

Some authority members expressed disappointment that they couldn't satisfy more of the record 89 grant requests that arrived in 2007-08. Those requests totaled 27.7 million.

But that long list of applicants accompanied a slight drop in trust fund revenues due to faltering real estate and housing markets. The trust fund is supported primarily by the state's tax on real estate deed transfers, and 30 percent of the fund is set aside for the local grant program.

Annual revenue dropped almost \$7 million, although new legislative authority to return interest income to

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VIEW FROM NEARBY GRASSY BALD TOWARD YELLOW MOUNTAIN, PART OF THE ROAN HIGHLANDS REGION. (PHOTO COURTESY OF JAY LEUTZE)

TWO STATE NATURAL AREAS ADDED TO PARKS SYSTEM

Two new state natural areas in western North Carolina have been authorized by the N.C. General Assembly to be developed as units of the state parks system. The authorization bill was signed by Gov. Mike Easley.

The authorization of the Yellow Mountain and Bear Paw state natural areas, both centered in Avery County, allows the state parks system to begin a land acquisition process that will involve nonprofit conservation organizations and the Parks and Recreation, Natural

Heritage and Clean Water Management trust funds.

A state natural area differs from a state park, in that while both protect important natural resources, a state natural area's focus is on conservation of sites of special scientific and ecological value. State natural areas often do not have public facilities, but sometimes support limited recreation activities such as hiking and education programs.

"An important part of our mission is to protect rep-

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Department of Environment and Natural Resources

UP CLOSE AND 'PERSONNEL'

Daniel Harvey joined the staff of Jordan Lake State Recreation Area as a ranger. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Old Dominion University and has worked as an outdoor program manager

and teacher.

David Rodgers has joined the staff of Pilot Mountain State Park as a maintenance mechanic. A graduate of East Surry High School, he has been working as a seasonal

at the park since 2002 and has more than 17 years related experience.

Joseph Eatman is a new maintenance mechanic at Falls Lake State Recreation Area. He has more than seven years related experience and is a graduate of Clayton High School and Wake Technical Community College.

Daniel Baumgardner Jr. has been promoted to a senior maintenance mechanic position at New River State Park. He began working at the park in June 2007 after jobs at Mount Mitchell State Park and with the National Park Service in Blowing Rock. He is a graduate of South Caldwell High School.

Herbert Breeden is a new maintenance mechanic at Gorges State Park. A graduate of Rosman High School and Blue Ridge Community College, he has spent several years as a truck driver and machinery technician.

Jacob Arther joined the staff at William B. Umstead State Park as a maintenance mechanic. A veteran of the U.S. Army, he previously worked at the park as a general utility worker and as a security officer at the Shearon Harris nuclear generating plant.

Ann Wunderly is a new ranger at Jockey's Ridge State Park. A graduate of Virginia Tech University with a bachelor's degree in natural resource recreation, she previously worked as an environmental technician and site manager for the Division of Coastal Management, as a curator for the Wildlife Resources Commission and as a seasonal employee at the state park.

From The Director's Desk

The authorization by the N.C. General Assembly of new state natural areas at Yellow Mountain and Bear Paw brought new attention to those units of the state parks system and rightly so.

While the establishment of a new state park, especially one such as Chimney Rock, has a higher public profile, the new state natural areas are also vitally important to the cause of conservation. The system now has 20 state natural areas covering about 20,000 acres, or roughly 10 percent of the total that we manage. But, some of these areas represent the state's most fragile and threatened ecosystems. Yellow Mountain is part of the Roan Highlands region, which boasts at least 76 rare species.

Our partner conservation organizations recognize this and have already been working hard in these areas for years. For these two projects, they include The Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, the High Country Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land, a high-caliber roster.

Gratitude must also extend to the N.C. General Assembly, which has supported this lesser-known part of our mission by authorizing the units. This year, its support includes \$50 million in certificates of deposit to be channeled through the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds for other equally important land acquisitions.

Partnerships don't end once a state park or natural area is up and running. We owe a great debt of thanks to nearby communities, the Division of Water Resources and the Division of Coastal Management for help at Hammocks Beach State Park where we've needed a dredging permit and financial help to improve the park's only channel to Bear Island.

And, Pilot Mountain State Park celebrated its 40th anniversary this summer, an event made even more special by the enthusiastic support of local communities. Some of these same folks were involved in the creation of the park and it was important to share the anniversary with them.

Sincerely,



Lewis Ledford

PARKS OFFICIALS ACCEPT HONORS

Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system, and Billy Totten, recently retired north district superintendent, were recently declared Honorary Wardens by Audubon North Carolina.

The honors were bestowed at the organization's annual meeting at Haw River State Park hosted by the T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society.

And, Ledford, has been elected to the board of trustees of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

Audubon Honorary Wardens are recognized for their exemplary service in protection of North Carolina's most important bird habitats and sanctuaries.

Ledford and Totten spearheaded the creation of a partnership through which Audubon and the Division of Parks and Recreation are expanding the state parks system's holdings to benefit birds and their habitats.

One example of the strong partnership was a grass-roots campaign to add a threatened 700-acre parcel to Haw River State Park in Guilford County in concert with the T. Gilbert Pearson Chapter.

"Audubon finds its greatest strength in its grass-roots members and allied partners who, working together, enhance conservation in North Carolina," said Chris Canfield, executive director of Audubon North Carolina. "These special awards recognize and inspire work that will affect generations to come."

Ledford, who joined the parks system as a ranger in 1976, has been a park superintendent, district superintendent and director since 2003.

Totten retired in May after a 30-year career having worked at Medoc Mountain, Pilot Mountain, Stone Mountain and Lake Norman state parks and at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.

The NRPA has been an active voice for public parks, recreation and land preservation in the United States and Canada since 1965. Its 21-member board of trustees represents about 22,000 members of park professionals, citizen advocates, educators and students.

It is the largest professional and citizen organization dedicated to advancing parks, recreation and conservation efforts.

Ledford will be installed at the NRPA Congress and Exposition in Baltimore, Md. in October.

Ledford also serves on the board and represents the Southeast for two other national professional associations, NASPD and NASARLO.

PARKS FILMS WIN AWARDS

Two short films about state parks recently won Telly Awards, a nationally recognized awards program for local, regional and cable film and television productions.

Both films *The New River: A Long and Winding Journey*, and *The South Mountains: At Nature's Crossroads* were produced by the N.C. Agency

for Public Telecommunications.

The films were produced with the help of state park rangers and the parks system's interpretation and education specialists and are intended to promote the natural resources and missions of the parks.

The Telly Awards considered more than 14,000 entries.

'PARK' IT

WITH A STATE PARKS
SPECIALTY LICENSE TAG



The Division of Parks and Recreation is accepting applications and payment for the first 300 license plates. There is a \$30 fee in addition to regular license fees (\$60 for personalized plates). Additional fees support conservation through the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds.

**Applications online at www.ncparks.gov
or write: Adrienne McCoig, N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
1615 MSC, Raleigh, NC 27699-1615**

PILOT MOUNTAIN CELEBRATES 40TH

When Pilot Mountain State Park was formally dedicated July 24, 1968, Tom Ellis, then superintendent of state parks, ceremoniously cancelled the \$1 admission fee charged to what had been a private nature park.

Exactly 40 years later, more than 100 people enjoyed the same free admission for a special anniversary celebration on top of the signature piedmont landmark.

Many local residents, some of whom had a hand in creation of the park, gathered to swap stories, view old photos, listen to string music and take a sunset hike around the big pinnacle.

A post office employee designed a commemorative cancellation stamp to use for the day.

The mountain had 404,360 visitors last year, and none of them paid admission, thanks to the efforts of citizens who raised funds and lobbied for a federal matching grant so that the state could buy 2,143 acres for the park from owner Pearl Beasley.

It became North Carolina's 14th state park.

The sunset hikers took

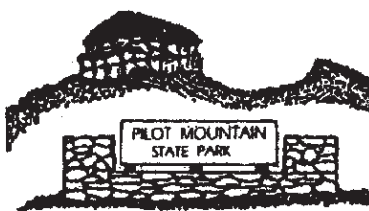
McCoig Completes Course

Adrienne McCoig, executive assistant to the director of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, successfully completed the 2008 Administrative Professional Certificate Program (APCP) of the Office of State Personnel and Wake Technical Community College.

The APCP is an intense study that provides opportunities to meet the evolving personal and specialized needs of



VISITORS EXAMINE OLD PHOTOGRAPHS AND DOCUMENTS ABOUT PILOT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK. BELOW, A SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE POST OFFICE CANCELLATION STAMP DESIGNED BY A LOCAL POSTAL WORKER.



the park's Jomeokee trail, so named for the American Indians' word for the knob, meaning "great guide" or "pilot."

Park Superintendent Matt Windsor said that some early settlers called it Mount Ararat, after the Biblical landing place of Noah's ark, and others called it Stone Head

administrative professionals, focusing on office procedures and practice, computer skills and interpersonal skills.

Classes for the 2008 session were held at the Personnel Development Center in Raleigh for five months.

The 2007 (pilot) APCP included division staff members Denise Williams of the operations section and Kelly Chandler of the division warehouse.

Mountain.

Moravian settlers first called it Pilot Mountain in 1753. Its first owner was Andre Mathieu, a French soldier who fought in the American Revolution. An engineer-geologist W.L. Spoon built the road to the summit in 1922 and a stairway to the big pinnacle in 1929.

Pearl Beasley and her husband J.W. bought the mountain from Spoon's estate in 1944 for \$14,500 and opened a swimming pool about midway to the summit in 1950 and a pavilion for dances.

The park has matured gracefully, now covering 3,651 acres including a presence on the Yadkin River and it still offers views covering more than 3,000 square miles.

"Pilot Mountain's birth as a state park began with local citizens who worked hard to protect this beautiful place, so it's fitting that we shared the 40th anniversary with some of those same people, their children and grandchildren." Windsor said.

HAMMOCKS GETS PERMIT AND FERRIES

Hammocks Beach State Park is replacing its two 19-year-old ferries with custom-made fiberglass models and, if all goes well, will have a deeper, wider channel by next spring, for the craft to carry visitors to Bear Island.

A state permit has been granted to dredge Cow Channel, the narrow approach to the barrier island that has been periodically filling with storm-driven sand in recent years. The dredging could begin in November.

The permit allows channel dredging to a width of 50 feet and a depth of nine feet, an increase from the traditional width of 25 feet and depth of seven feet.

"We're hoping that the extra width and depth will create a better flow of water through the channel and increase the length of time between dredging projects," said Park Superintendent Paul Donnelly.

The park's difficulties had become critical by late 2006 when its 28-passenger ferries could no longer navigate the channel during low tide. The park began using smaller, shallow-draft ferries, but those could only transport 11 visitors at a time.

In March 2007, the park received an emergency permit and financing for emergency dredging from the Division of Water Resources and normal ferry service was restored. But, the parks system has been planning for a more extensive dredging project for several years.

The park has taken delivery on one of its new ferries from Corinthian Catamarans LLC of Palm Harbour, Fla.

At 44 feet, the new fiberglass vessels are just four feet longer than the old aluminum pontoon models, but can carry 49 passengers per trip.

Donnelly said that maintenance mechanic Darren Fulcher worked closely with Corinthian Catamarans to fine-tune the design of boats. Hulls were poured as single units, producing a stable, catamaran-style split bottom.

"There was a considerable amount of thought and logistical planning that went into the design, construction, delivery and operation of these new vessels," Donnelly said. "Darren is the one that deserves a lot of the credit, along with Joanne Barbour, our purchasing agent."

The second ferry will likely be delivered in October and both will be pressed into service

after U.S. Coast Guard inspection procedures. They'll be named Hammocks Beach II and Bear Island II, Donnelly said.

The park plans to convert one of the old ferries into a barge for transporting vehicles and equipment to the island, he said.

STATE PARKS IMAGES IN GALLERY SHOWING

Beginning Oct. 2, people can take a walk through North Carolina's state parks without leaving Raleigh.

Niche Publishing LLC announces an exhibition of photographs at Lee Hansley Gallery, 225 Glenwood Avenue in Raleigh from Oct. 2-16.

The large format, limited edition giclee images were selected from photographs shot for Niche's recent book, *North Carolina State Parks: A Niche Guide* distributed by Blair Publishing. The book has been available in state parks since publication in 2007.

The book's photographs were drawn from thousands of images shot by authors Ida Phillips and Bill Pendergraft after years of work with North Carolina state parks. Additional images were produced by Jere Snyder of Raleigh.

The authors are no strangers to North Carolina's natural areas. Phillips is the author of *Duke Forest: A Resource for All Seasons* and a frequent contributor to *Wildlife in North Carolina*. Pendergraft wrote and produced the video series *Wild, NC* on coastal state parks and has written and produced media for many park visitor centers and a state parks documentary.

"We hope our photographs will encourage people to visit our wonderful state parks," Pendergraft said. "Photography can do many things and one is to elevate the importance of wild places in a world that is becoming increasingly urban. Our state parks are becoming sanctuaries for our remaining plants and animals, and places where people can pause for reflection."

Phillips said, "Our state parks system continues to expand and we hope that our book and photographs will help raise awareness of these diverse places from the Gorges to Dismal Swamp."

Following a special opening for state parks staff Oct. 2, the gallery opening reception is scheduled for Oct. 5, from 2-5 p.m. The authors will also sign books at the exhibition.

*GRANDPARENTS
AND CHILDREN
WORKED TO UN-
TANGLE LINES OF
COMMUNICATION
DURING THE THREE-
DAY CAMP AT HAW
RIVER STATE PARK.*



GRAND CAMP

GENERATIONS CONNECT IN THE OUTDOORS

It's a long way from New Mexico to North Carolina and often a long time between visits for Judy Leatherwood and her grandson, Jack.

"Most of the time when I visit with the grandchildren, it's not just us together," said Leatherwood, who makes the trip from her retirement home in the New Mexico mountains to Greensboro two or three times a year. "If it's a holiday, there's always so much going on, there's not much time for one-on-one."

But at Grand Camp on the Haw River, there's time enough for fishing, searing hot dogs over a campfire, walking in the woods and sometimes just talking.

Leatherwood is an experienced mountain hiker, can handily toss a bass lure and identify wildlife and can warm to a conversation with just about anybody. Grandson Jack got a real opportunity to witness some of his grandmother's skills during the three days of camp.

The Summit environmental education center at Haw River State Park conducted its first Grand Camp in August, with 24 children and grandparents signing up for some simple and traditional camp experiences.

Inviting grandparents to attend camp with their grandchildren is a new and popular trend at

summer camps across the country. It's one way for the generations to connect in a society that's become so very mobile and increasingly rootless.

In some cases, it's a chance for grandparents to revive skills they may not have used for decades, whether it's on the bank of a fishing

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ONE OF THE CAMP'S ACTIVITIES WAS BIRDWATCHING IN THE WOODS AND WETLANDS ALONG THE HAW RIVER.

GRAND CAMP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

pond or in a craft class.

And in these days of the so-called “nature deficit disorder,” camp is supposed to reconnect children with nature’s wonders. Sometimes that can be easier when stressed out, goal-oriented parents aren’t around.

“What I call the ‘grandparent effect’ takes over,” said Kathryn Royall, the director of education at The Summit.

The camp’s itinerary is geared to maximize that grandparent effect, which involves an exploratory frame of mind and a natural aversion to the “no” word.

There were subtle lessons to be learned about natural resources, of course, but there was built-in free time for splashing in the pool, for cooling down in a reading room and there had to be a designated “smores” session.

JUDY LEATHERWOOD, RIGHT, WHO LIVES IN NEW MEXICO, FOUND PLENTY OF TIME TO NURTURE A RELATIONSHIP WITH HER GRANDSON, JACK, WHO LIVES IN GREENSBORO.



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES WERE FEATURED, BUT THERE WAS SPACE IN THE SCHEDULE FOR READING OR JUST TALKING.

MOUNTAIN PARKS RECOGNIZED BY MAGAZINE

Mount Mitchell and Chimney Rock state parks received recognition this summer in the “Best of the Blue Ridge” survey for 2008 conducted by Blue Ridge Country magazine.

Mount Mitchell won a platinum award as the best state park in North Carolina, and Chimney Rock followed just behind with a gold award in the same category.

Every five years, readers are asked to vote for their favorite towns, places, festivals, hikes, artists, restaurants and similar places and activities in a nine-state area stretching from Maryland

to Alabama.

Chimney Rock State Park also garnered a special platinum award for the “best mountain turnaround/success story,” due to North Carolina’s acquisition in 2007 of the former tourist destination to enlarge the developing park in the Hickory Nut Gorge.

The New River in Ashe and Alleghany counties was also recognized as the “best canoeing river” in the Blue Ridge region.

Complete results of the survey can be found at www.blueridgecountry.com.

TRUST FUND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the trust fund recovered about \$2.3 million of the shortfall.

The declining revenues also affect the plans for pending state parks land acquisition and capital projects.

The authority approved requests from the state parks system in October, but in some cases, had to readjust the allocations.

For land acquisition at Chimney Rock State Park, a \$2 million direct allocation from the trust fund was replaced by that amount in certificates of participation – a bond-like instrument that pledges future trust fund revenues.

Also, the authority reallocated \$372,000 from land acquisition at Mayo River State Park to Lake Waccamaw State Park due to a deadline to close a land deal. This will allow the park to offer a boat access at the park in an area that a developer had planned to divide into lots.

The authority directed \$300,000 in fourth-quarter revenues to master plans for Haw River, Chimney Rock and Carvers Creek state parks. The plans will guide development at each of the new parks with detailed analysis of cultural, scenic, recreational, geologic and natural resources.

The public, local governments and other agencies will be invited to participate in the master planning process.

Rick Studenmund of The Nature Conservancy gave the authority a presentation about that organization's conservation efforts in partnership with the state parks system that included recent developments at Carvers Creek State Park.

The conservancy is donating the Long Valley Farm just northwest of Fayetteville to the Carvers Creek project. The authority was given a tour of that property on the day after its meeting.

The 1,415-acre tract was developed as a country estate by James Stillman Rockefeller, a New York City banker, who willed it to the conservancy. It features a 100-acre lake, a large home and areas of cypress swamp and longleaf pine forest.

Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system, gave the authority an overview of 2008 legislation that will affect the state parks system.

The most significant is the approval of \$50 million in funding through certificates of

participation for land conservation. The total is to be shared equally between the Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds and will be repaid from the state's general fund.

The General Assembly also authorized the Yellow Mountain and Bear Paw state natural areas and set aside \$107 million for the Green Square project in Raleigh, an office complex that will house part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. It is likely that state parks headquarters will be relocated there.

A study was also ordered by the legislature on the feasibility of developing areas in Rutherford County as a new state trail.

NATURAL AREAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

representative examples of North Carolina's rich diversity of natural resources. Establishing state natural areas is a practical way to do this," said Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system. "Land conservancies and trust funds are invaluable partners in this important effort."

The system had 17 state natural areas established before the recent authorizations. Several, such as Mount Jefferson and Occoneechee Mountain are popular with the public and operated in conjunction with nearby state parks.

Since the system's New Parks for a New Century initiative was launched in 2001, the Elk Knob, Lower Haw, Mountain Bogs and Sandy Run Savannas state natural areas have been authorized. Since then,

Elk Knob in Watauga and Ashe counties has been re-authorized as a state park.

Through New Parks for a New Century, the Division of Parks and Recreation tries to identify every site in North Carolina with potential as a state natural area based on criteria related to high-quality natural communities.

The Yellow Mountain State Natural Area will be established with an initial land acquisition of about 850 acres through the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and located in two tracts along the Avery-Mitchell county line just west of U.S. 19 and south of Pisgah National Forest.

Yellow Mountain is part of the Roan Highlands region, which encompasses one of

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STAFF GETS FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING

As part of an ongoing commitment to the safety of park visitors and employees, 29 state parks staff members recently completed 40 hours of medical first responder training.

All state park rangers, maintenance mechanics and some other designated employees are required to complete this initial first responder training and maintain 16 hours of continuing education every two years as a job requirement. They also complete annual refresher training in CPR and the use of automatic external defibrillators (AED) units.

Based on national standards for medical first responders, the training covers techniques such as initial patient assessment and helping prepare a patient for transport.

The state parks system also recently received 45 new defibrillator units, bringing the



FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING FOR STATE PARKS STAFF INCLUDES TECHNIQUES FOR PREPARING A PATIENT FOR TRANSPORT.

system's total to 89 units in the 36 state parks and state recreation areas.

The AED units ensure a timely response to victims of cardiac arrest. Larger parks with multiple access areas have mul-

multiple units to shorten response times during emergencies.

Research shows that every minute of delay in providing care for a cardiac patient decreases survival rates by 10 percent.

NATURAL AREAS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

the most outstanding clusters of rare species and natural communities in the southern Appalachians, including grassy balds that are the best known anywhere in the world.

Other features of the area include high elevation peaks and ridges, cliffs, mountain coves and streams. At least 76 rare plant and animal species have been reported in the Roan Highlands.

The Bear Paw State Natural Area will be established with an initial land acquisition of about 350 acres through the High Country Conservancy and located just north of Grandfather Mountain and the Town of Seven Devils. The areas name

comes from the Cherokee *yōnah-wayah*, or bear's paw.

The site is of national ecological importance and includes Hanging Rock Ridge, Four Diamond Ridge and the headwaters of Dutch Creek. And, it contains an outstanding example of a rare, high elevation, rocky summit supporting nine rare species including the federally endangered Virginia big-eared bat.

A private donation of \$1.3 million has been pledged to assist with land acquisition and a Natural Heritage Trust Fund grant of \$3.85 million has been set aside.

Both projects focus on the protection of sites identi-

fied as important by the N.C. Conservation Planning Tool, a comprehensive reference integrating all best available information about quality natural resources in the state.

Future expansion of both state natural areas will be dependent on negotiations with willing sellers. And, the extent of public access and recreation will depend on the availability of suitable tracts of land.

Non-governmental conservation partners in the creation of the state natural areas include the High Country Conservancy, the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land.

NEW RIVER MARKS HERITAGE MILESTONE

By Vicki Randolph

New River Community Partners

More than 1,000 people attended an American Heritage River Day Festival at New River State Park's 221 Access in June.

The event marked the 10th anniversary of the river's designation by President Bill Clinton, who signed an executive order at the state park in 1998 as part of the American Heritage Rivers Initiative.

Entertainment included folk and bluegrass music and storytelling by Orville Hicks as well as a traditional mountain handicrafts. Park rangers offered educational programs throughout the day and children created nature crafts in the park's new visitor center.

The festival was the first in a series of summer celebrations along the river. Radford Heritage Days in Radford, Va., and West Virginia Days in Hinton, W.Va. were scheduled for later in the month.

The three festivals as well as communities in all three states are tied by the common thread of the river. This fact is being reinforced in a very unique way by the 10th Annual Paddle Pilgrimage, a group of canoeists floating the entire route and passing a commemorative paddle at each stop.

A Passing-of-the-Paddle ceremony at New River State Park was a highlight of the festival. The paddle is engraved with the title of the float and honors the New River and its watershed communities.

The purpose of the trip is not only to connect the festivals, but to connect all of the people, places and communities in between, said Shawn Hash,



SHAWN HASH, LEFT, OF THE NEW RIVER PADDLE PILGRIMAGE PASSES A CEREMONIAL PADDLE TO RANGER SCOTT ROBINSON AT THE FESTIVAL.

expedition leader and a Virginia outfitter.

"The idea of the float is to promote upstream advocacy with downstream responsi-

bility," Hash said. "Building relationships is the key thing – when people get together and establish relationships, good things happen."

PARKS USE SUMMER INTERNS

This summer, New River State Park and Mount Jefferson State Natural Area received coveted Youth Advocacy Internship positions allowing college students to work on important natural resource projects.

Eric Dodson, an environmental science student at Western Carolina University, spent the summer at Mount Jefferson using the study of lichens as a tool to measure changes in air quality. He was supervised by Ranger Tom Randolph.

Based on a European model, the project is a reliable and inexpensive way to monitor air quality. Dodson also worked on developing curriculum for the park's Environmental Education Learning Experience and a biotic inventory project.

At New River, Katherine Hale, a senior at St. Johns College in Annapolis, Md., worked on a floristic survey, cataloguing and photographing common and uncommon plant species. She worked under the supervision of Ranger Paul Bailey.

Hale contributed to the state parks system's Natural Resources Inventory Database.

The internships are coordinated by the North Carolina Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office. Nearly 600 students applied for the 100 positions in 22 departments of state government.

The program, established in 1970, is the oldest and largest paid state government internship program in the country.

NYGARD TO LEAD NORTH DISTRICT

Erik Nygard, formerly the superintendent at Hanging Rock State Park, has been promoted to north district superintendent for the state parks system. He succeeds William Totten, who retired in May after a 30-year career.

As one of four district superintendents, Nygard will be responsible for operations, resource management, environmental education programming, law enforcement, safety and facility maintenance for nine state parks from Hanging Rock in Stokes County to Kerr Lake State Recreation Area in the northeast.

"Erik is one of our most experienced superintendents and has served as a ranger at three state parks," said Lewis Ledford, director of the state

parks. "He is highly qualified for the range of challenges that a district superintendent encounters in a growing state parks system."

Nygard is a 23-year veteran of the state parks system and was named superintendent of Hanging Rock State Park in 2003. A native of Durham and a graduate of Northern Durham High School, he earned a bachelor's degree in forestry from North Carolina State University in 1982.

He has been a ranger at Eno River, Pilot Mountain and



William B. Umstead state parks and also served nearly four years as a district interpretation and education specialist in eastern North Carolina. He is a certified environmental educator. In 1993-95, he served in the Peace Corps as a community forester in Nepal.

"I am honored to be called upon to provide direction of the district staff to achieve the parks system's mission," Nygard said. "I am fortunate to follow district superintendents William Totten, Susan Tillotson and others who have provided excellent groundwork. I will always receive a great amount of satisfaction from providing our park visitors information about our state's natural heritage and seeing them smile as they learn about a new concept or process."

WATKINS SUPERINTENDENT AT MAYO

Fred Watkins, a veteran ranger at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area, has been named superintendent of Mayo River State Park in Rockingham County. Watkins succeeds Adrienne Wallace, who was named superintendent at Chimney Rock State Park earlier this year.

A superintendent is the chief of operations and administration at a state park or state recreation area with wide-ranging responsibilities for staffing, training, law enforcement, visitor services, natural resource protection and environmental education.

A native of Williamsport, Pa., Watkins graduated in 1989 from California University of Pennsylvania in California, Pa. with a bachelor's degree

in environmental conservation and worked as a seasonal employee for the state parks system at Jordan Lake and Hammocks Beach State Park.

In 1991, he became a ranger at the Parkers Creek section of Jordan Lake and moved to the Vista Point section in 1996. In 2004, his duties were expanded to include oversight of the Lower Haw State Natural Area in Chatham County and the developing Deep River State Trail in Lee County.

Watkins is a certified environmental educator and



earned advanced law enforcement certification.

"Mayo River State Park will come of age in the near future as we continue land acquisition and begin construction of interim facilities for the public," said Lewis Ledford, director of state parks. "Fred's experience at one of our busiest state parks and his knowledge of resource protection on the Haw and Deep rivers give him an excellent background to guide the growth of this new state park."

"I appreciate the opportunity to manage one of the system's newest parks," Watkins said. "There are many challenges ahead and I look forward to working with a great staff to meet those challenges while protecting the park's natural resources."

PETTIGREW'S SHEARIN BIDS GOODBYE

If guests at a retirement luncheon in June for Sid Shearin, superintendent at Pettigrew State park, were a bit teary-eyed, it wasn't just nostalgia to blame.

A 40,000-acre wildfire which reared up in the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, and which grazed the state park, was intermittently sending smoke through the area. Water from the park's Lake Phelps was being pumped into the fire zone to saturate the land.

It was a near repeat of a 1985 fire when the park's lake also played a significant role.

"This time, what we're going through probably wouldn't be as easy as it has been without Sid going through what he did in '85," said East District Superintendent Adrian O'Neal. "Thank you, Sid, for being a great superintendent."

Over a 31-year career – including 25 years as superintendent at Pettigrew – Shearin earned a reputation for being fiercely protective of the park's natural resources, including the lake's waters and the towering trees along its banks.

He spent many days showing off the trees – some of them champion specimens – to groups that visited the park and many more hours devising ways to get the area school students involved in park projects and raising their environmental consciousness.

The payoff, Shearin said, was the sights he'd witnessed at the state park – flocks of migrating tundra swans, colonies of bats seeking shelter and packs of red wolves hunting.

"I've just been plain lucky to be a part of the North



SHEARIN AND HIS FAMILY LISTEN TO ACCOLADES AND ANECDOTES AT HIS RETIREMENT LUNCHEON FOLLOWING A 31-YEAR CAREER.

Carolina state parks system," said Shearin, who has visited 197 state and national parks in his lifetime and camped at 87 of them.

Shearin graduated from high school in Greenville in 1972 and from North Carolina State University in 1976 with a bachelor's degree in recreation and parks administration. In 1975, he was a seasonal employee at Morrow Mountain

State Park.

He made several attempts to get onto a lean state parks roster before being hired as a maintenance mechanic at Medoc Mountain State Park in 1977. Two years later, he had earned a spot as a ranger at that park.

In April 1983, Shearin was tapped to lead Pettigrew, then a quite small state park on the state's second largest natural lake.

Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks, said Shearin's personnel file quickly grew with paperwork related to his efforts to get grants to improve the park and with projects involving partnership with the local school systems.

"If there was a grant to be got, he got it," said Tom Wells, former superintendent of state parks. "He represented this division as well as anyone I know. If anybody could wave the flag for this division, he waved it better than anybody."



EAST DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT ADRIAN O'NEAL PRESENTS SHEARIN WITH CERTIFICATE.

COMBINED CAMPAIGN UNDER WAY

The 2008 State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC) will run through Sept. 30 allowing all state parks system employees to contribute to charities and nonprofit organizations throughout the state.

The purpose of the campaign is to allow state employees to contribute in an orderly and uniform process. The campaign is the only authorized charitable fundraising effort permitted to solicit in the state employee workplace.

“Our goal for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources this year is to raise \$100,000 and to achieve a 25 percent participation rate,” said Secretary Bill Ross. “This is a major goal, but I have seen this department come together and work as one in battling the Evans Road fire. This SECC goal is just another opportunity to show what DENR employees can do together. With your help, I know we can do it.”

In 2007, DENR was awarded one of the SECC’s top awards, the Governor’s Award for highest percentage increase in total participation.

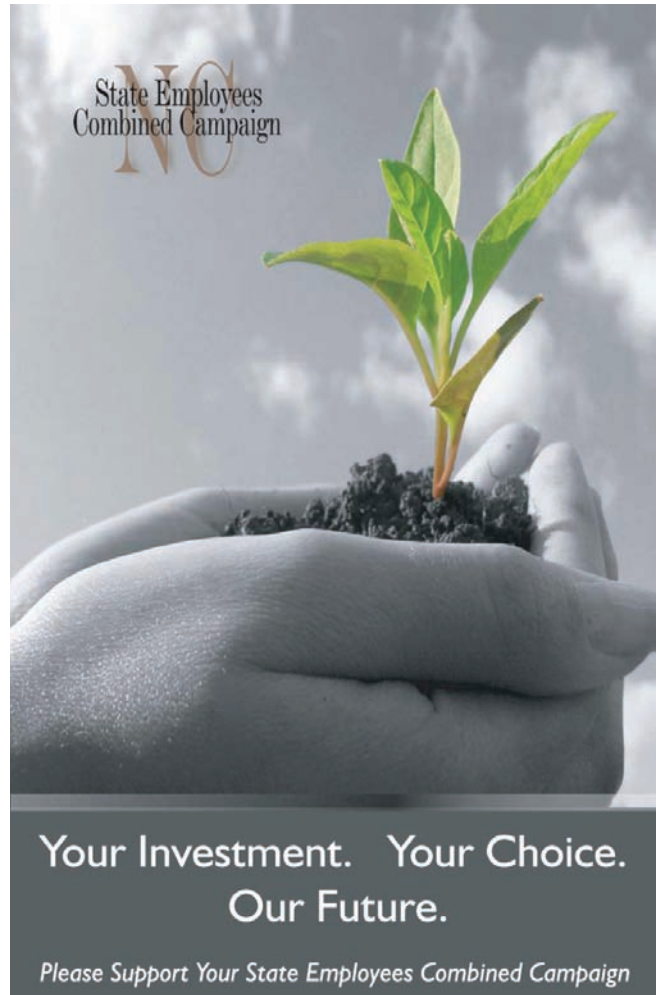
In 1984, Gov. Jim Hunt issued an executive order establishing the campaign. State employees conducted their first campaign in 1986 and raised \$878,000.

Since then, state employees and retirees have contributed nearly \$60 million to hundreds of charities representing an array of programs and services. The campaign provides the department and the division an opportunity to join together as a team to accept the challenge and reward of meeting a common goal – helping others.

“I’ve often said there is a certain nobility association with public service, and I see it every day in the actions and commitment of the state parks system staff,” Don Reuter, DPR assistant director said. “The people in our division have dedicated their professional lives to protecting our state’s magnificent natural resources and making life better for North Carolinians and our guests.

“The State Employees Combined Campaign represents an opportunity to build upon those efforts to make things better for those less fortunate than us. I respectfully request that each and every division employee thoroughly consider making a contribution, no matter how small, through the campaign.”

Each employee will be given a Resource Guide that lists about 900 participating independent charities across the state. This allows state



parks employees to support organizations in their local communities if they choose.

Once the employee decides which charity to support, a Pledge Form enables the employee to choose how to honor a pledge. The most convenient way is by payroll deduction.

The minimum for payroll deduction is \$5 per month (about 20 cents per day). Donations can also be made by cash, check or credit card. The SECC offers a secure site for credit card transactions through PayPal.

Pledge Forms, information from the Resource Guide and other details are at this Web site: www.ncsecc.org.

“Your contribution this year to one of our campaign charities is more important than ever,” said Britt Cobb, secretary of administration and this year’s state campaign chairman.

“When we think of charitable giving, certain words come to mind: compassion, kindness and thoughtfulness are a few. They also define us as public employees.

AMEN CORNER

To New River State Park:

We recently camped at the New River State Park (Wagoner Road) and just wanted to say what a joy it was. We stayed July 6-8 and this park has the best sites, wonderfully close to the river, best bathhouses and cleanest park in the state in my opinion. The staff came by the site so many times for trash and little things that we were really impressed. Especially this nice fella named Jerry. He was the first contact we had with the staff and also the friendliest. I had a flat tire on my Jeep the last day getting ready to leave and Jerry came to the rescue.

James, Mingia, Allison, Jerry and Lillian Brown

To Director Lewis Ledford:

I want to commend several of your state park rangers who came to the aid of my three-year-old child recently while camping at Jordan Lake. On April 12, 2008, my son was climbing down the ladder from a top bunk bed in our camper. As he was climbing down he slipped and fell approximately 3-4 feet to the floor.

As I was tending to him I noticed a considerable amount of blood coming from the rear of his head and then noticed a deep laceration. I immediately applied pressure and a friend called 911. Within minutes, I was met by Ranger Marcus Crossman who escorted us to the entrance of the park to await an ambulance.

Ranger Crossman and several other rangers who were on scene tended to my child and set up a clear path for EMS to respond. I was extremely impressed by the professionalism and empathy that the rangers provided to my son and me during this stressful and scary time.

I am grateful to all of the rangers of Jordan Lake who protect us and provide for us when we need them the most. Please send my heartfelt appreciation to all those who assisted us on this day.

Edward J. Bruscino, Jr.
Detective, Greensboro Police Department

To Hanging Rock State Park:

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank and personally recognized Ranger (Jason) Anthony during our stay at Hanging Rock State Park.

Where there he made us feel comfortable out our safety and kept us posted a to potential hazardous weather. Additionally, he was personable and showed genuine concern for our welfare.

In this day and age when only complaints about law enforcement are highlighted, I wanted to ensure that when a law enforcement officer does well he/she needs to be recognized. From my point of view as a citizen, Ranger Anthony epitomizes the qualities and standards of a N.C. state park ranger.

Jim Deloatch

APPALACHIAN TRAIL ADVENTURE



BRYSON YOUNG, A MARS HILL COLLEGE GRADUATE AND A SEASONAL EMPLOYEE AT MOUNT MITCHELL STATE PARK FOR SEVERAL YEARS, IS UNDERTAKING A THROUGH-HIKE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL FROM MAINE TO GEORGIA THIS YEAR WITH HIS FRIEND BRANDON BURLESON. EXCERPTS FROM HIS JOURNAL ARE PUBLISHED IN THE MITCHELL NEWS-JOURNAL (WWW.MITCHELLNEWS.COM). HERE BURLESON, LEFT, AND YOUNG REST ON MOXIE BALD MOUNTAIN IN MAINE.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS

MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT

JUNE, 2008

NC STATE PARK	June 2008	TOTAL YTD Jun-08	June 2007	TOTAL YTD Jun-07	% CHANGE (2008/2007) Jun YTD	
Carolina Beach	52,160	214,884	64,100	251,358	-19%	-15%
Chimney Rock	26,098	85,117	0	0	-100%	-100%
Cliffs of the Neuse	15,097	66,029	16,309	67,735	-7%	-3%
Crowders Mountain	25,349	186,875	34,267	198,669	-26%	-6%
Dismal Swamp	3,057	13,708	0	0	-100%	-100%
Elk Knob	634	1,322	0	0	-100%	-100%
Eno River including Occoneechee Mountain	42,543	204,733	38,779	201,134	10%	2%
Falls Lake	139,531	427,003	155,939	513,796	-11%	-17%
Fort Fisher	123,784	305,624	163,521	388,123	-24%	-21%
Fort Macon	142,960	541,744	171,632	571,260	-17%	-5%
Goose Creek	18,916	85,846	17,440	83,062	8%	3%
Gorges	2,037	11,984	19,716	56,101	-90%	-79%
Hammocks Beach	16,899	60,177	15,453	52,551	9%	15%
Haw River	1,891	12,381	0	8,409	-100%	47%
Hanging Rock	63,348	194,745	59,604	214,576	6%	-9%
Jones Lake	11,583	47,731	11,506	38,453	1%	24%
Jordan Lake	131,915	424,096	439,997	684,795	-70%	-38%
Jockey's Ridge	198,647	548,215	259,526	715,565	-23%	-23%
Kerr Lake	168,868	560,312	189,196	523,484	-11%	7%
Lake James	62,091	175,596	56,221	189,976	10%	-8%
Lake Norman	59,352	255,366	59,865	229,239	-1%	11%
Lake Waccamaw	10,929	31,194	15,528	48,483	-30%	-36%
Lumber River	7,216	42,684	9,116	43,516	-21%	-2%
Merchants Millpond	24,437	115,761	11,609	70,213	111%	65%
Medoc Mountain	4,940	25,781	5,127	24,385	-4%	6%
Mount Mitchell	23,802	52,505	47,688	105,754	-50%	-50%
Morrow Mountain	44,700	181,528	45,360	186,980	-1%	-3%
New River including Mount Jefferson	42,250	110,576	45,444	119,471	-7%	-7%
Pettigrew	3,430	40,359	5,145	32,136	-33%	26%
Pilot Mountain	35,700	68,324	38,900	182,101	-8%	-62%
Raven Rock	8,518	59,570	7,245	49,441	18%	20%
Singletary Lake	4,095	16,532	3,433	14,300	19%	16%
South Mountains	21,364	90,732	23,180	105,247	-8%	-14%
Stone Mountain	46,180	182,792	52,634	213,918	-12%	-15%
Weymouth Woods	3,743	26,814	4,270	25,270	-12%	6%
William B. Umstead	65,755	316,100	63,791	300,836	3%	5%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	1,653,819	5,784,740	2,151,541	6,510,337	-23%	-11%



Our Mission Remains...

to protect North Carolina's **natural diversity**;
to provide and promote **outdoor recreation**
opportunities throughout North Carolina;
to exemplify and encourage **good stewardship**
of North Carolina's natural resources for all
citizens and visitors.

*8,000 copies of this public document were printed
at a cost of \$630.00 or \$0.08 per copy.*

SAFETY ZONE

PRACTICE AND PLAN FIRE ESCAPE ROUTES

- ✓ Call your local fire department or county fire marshall for a free home inspection.
- ✓ Devise and practice escape routes for everyone in the family. Install escape ladder for upper floors of multi-level homes.
- ✓ Have an agreed-upon meeting place after escape, such as a neighbor's house, mailbox, etc.
- ✓ Practice and time your escape; everyone should be able to escape in two and a half minutes or less.

The Steward
NC Division of Parks and Recreation
Public Information Office
1615 MSC
Raleigh, NC 27699-1615

